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AUTHOR Pinson, Thomas M.
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ABSTRACT

A study of Dakota Sioux presents evidence for Possessor Ascension. In this construction, a nominal that is semantically a possessor is syntactically not a constituent of the noun phrase but a constituent of the clause. The report first discusses the universal characterization of Possessor Ascension in the framework of relational grammar, and describes ways in which Possessor Ascension is expressed in Sioux. Next, four arguments for this construction are presented. One is based on verb agreement, the second on reflexivization, the third on the distribution of the possessive morpheme, and the fourth on the morpheme /ki-/. Certain constraints on this construction are examined. The effect of Possessor Ascension on verb agreement is seen as being of particular importance because it constitutes a strong argument against a frequently cited form of the verb agreement rule in Sioux based on semantic notions. It is concluded that there are two types of Possessor Ascension in Dakota Sioux. The first follows the Host Limitation Law and is optional. The second type is ascension of a possessor to level 3 followed by advancement to 2. This type is obligatory and occurs only when the noun being possessed is alienable. A 28-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

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POSSESSOR ASCENSION IN DAKOTA SIOUX

Thomas M. Pinson

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1 Introduction

The goal of this paper is to present evidence for Possessor Ascension in Dakota Sioux[1]. In this construction, a nominal which is semantically a possessor is syntactically not a constituent of the noun phrase, but rather a constituent of the clause. I first discuss the universal characterization of Possessor Ascension from within the framework of Relational Grammar and give an introduction to the ways possession is expressed in Sioux. Next I present four arguments for this construction in Sioux. One is based on verb agreement, the second on reflexivization, the third on the distribution of the possessive morpheme, and the fourth on the morpheme ki-. Then I discuss certain constraints on the construction. The effect of Possessor Ascension on verb agreement is of particular importance since it constitutes a strong argument against a frequently cited form of the verb agreement rule in Sioux, a rule based on semantic notions.

2 Universal characterization of Possessor Ascension

In his article "Relational Grammar," Perlmutter (1980) states that the goal of a linguistic theory is to state how languages differ, and how they are alike. In order to accomplish this goal, Relational Grammar (henceforth RG) provides a universal characterization of constructions that are common to languages. Two types of Possessor Ascension (henceforth PA) have been attested in natural languages. They are represented by the following stratal diagrams:

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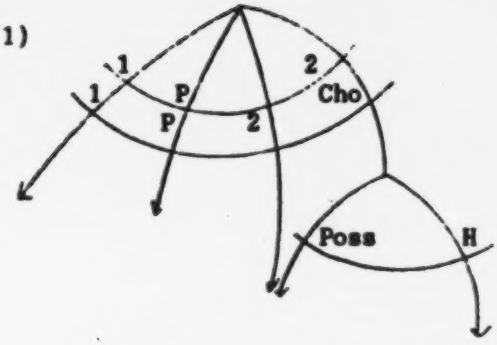
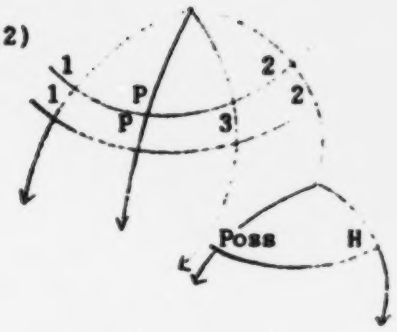
(1)



(2)



In the first type of PA, as shown in (1), the possessor ascends to take on the grammatical relation of the NP from which it comes (the host). This type of PA has been argued for in Kinyarwanda (Bickford 1986), Kera (Camburn 1984), and Southern Tiwa (Allen, Frantz, Gardner, and Perlmutter to appear). In the second type of PA, shown in (2), the possessor ascends to take on the grammatical relation of indirect object. This type of PA has been argued for in Choctaw (Davies 1986), Tzotzil (Aissen 1987), Kera (Camburn 1984), and Kinyarwanda (Bickford 1986).

What happens to the possessor in the NP after ascension is a language particular phenomenon. In some languages a pronominal copy occurs in the NP. In others, no copy occurs.

The second type of PA (cf. (2)) is anomalous because it violates the Relational Succession Law, which says:

(3) An ascendee assumes the grammatical relation of the host out of which is ascends.

Recently, there has been another analysis called Possessor Union by Rosen (1986) and Gerdts (1989). This analysis removes the anomaly by treating NPs as transitive clauses, thereby allowing the raising of possessor to 3 to be treated like other union constructions in which the downstairs ergative becomes the upstairs 3. It has been attested in many languages that the downstairs ergative may become the upstairs 3, cf. Cole 1983.

3 Possession in Dakota

In this section I discuss the different ways in which Dakota expresses possession. There are three primary ways it accomplishes this: 1) using a relative clause, 2) using morphology on the possessed noun, and 3) using morphology on the verb. The first method, I claim, has been incorrectly analyzed as a possessive pronoun. The second and third methods are related. I will discuss their relationship in section 4.3. In this section I only present the facts of the language.

It has been argued that Sioux has no set of adjectives (Van Valin 1977). Rather, Sioux uses relative clauses to express adjectival meaning in the NP. Consider (4) and (5).

(4) Wicaŝa mani hanska-pi.
man walk tall-pl
'The men who are walking are tall.'
'The walking men are tall.'

(5) Wicaŝa hanska mani-pi.
man tall walk-pl
'The men who are tall are walking.'
'The tall men are walking.'

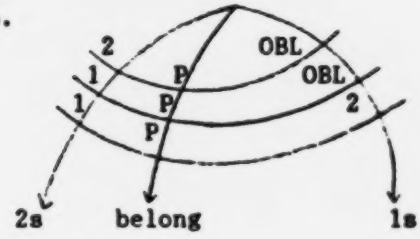
It has been previously claimed (Boas and Deloria 1941, Riggs 1968, and Beuchel 1983) that the morpheme t^hawa is a possessive pronoun. But based on the arguments that there are no adjectives, it follows that t^hawa is a verb, cf. (6).

(6) a. Ŝunka ni-t^hawa wa-kute.
dog 2s-belong 1s-shoot
'I shot your dog.'
'I shot the dog that belongs to you.'

In fact, Williamson (1979) argues that t^hawa is a double patient verb. This is illustrated in (7).

(7) a. Ni-mi-t^hawa.
2s-1s-belong.
'You belong to me.'

b.



The above construction can be used with any possessed object. This has not always been the case and I will discuss this historical change later.

The second method of expressing possession in Dakota is by means of person agreement in the NP. The agreement is affixed to the object being possessed. This construction is used with kinship terms and body

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parts but is not used with alienable possessions (i.e. shoes, dogs, etc.), cf. (8) - (10).

(8) Mi-ate kin kon.
1s-father DET old
'My father is old.'

(9) Mi-siha šica-ma.
1s-feet bad-smell
'My feet stink.'

(10) *Ni-šunka.
2s-dog

Historically, kinship terms could not occur with the verb t^{h}awa to express possession, but obligatorily had the person agreement prefixed on them (Boas and Deloria 1941:129-31). This is shown in (11). Examples like (12) are becoming more common, however.

(11) Ni-t^{h}ankši a-wa-p^{h}a.
2s-(younger) sister LOC-1s-hit
'I hit your sister.'

(12) T^{h}ankši mi-t^{h}awa a-ya-p^{h}a.
sister 1s-belong LOC-2s-hit
'You hit my sister.'

The third common construction that is used in Dakota to express possession is person agreement on the verb. It is concerning this construction that RG makes strong claims. For now I call this Possessor Ascension. In section 4, I argue for this analysis, and in section 5, I give the constraints. Consider (13) and (14).

(13) Nape ma-yaza.
hand 1s-hurt
'My hand hurts.'

(14) Hanpa ma-ki-yušdoka-pi.
shoe 1s-ADV-remove-pl
'They took my shoes off.'

In both of these clauses, the possessor is not expressed in the NP, rather on the verb with person agreement. I will argue that for both, the possessor ascends from an NP that is an initial 2 to an object term. There are differences in these clauses, though. The possessed object in (13) is inalienable and in (14) alienable. The possessor of inalienable objects ascends to 2. The possessor of alienable objects ascends to 3 and advances to 2, which is registered by the morpheme ki-.

4 Arguments for Possessor Ascension

4.1 Verb agreement

There are two sets of verb agreement affixes in Dakota. These affixes mark agreement in person and number with the subject and object. Table 1 gives the singular affixes.

Table 1

Set I:	wa/bd	1s	Set II:	ma	1s	{maya 1s:2s}
	ya/d	2s		ni	2s	{c^hi 2s:1s}
	0	3s		0	3s	

The bd- and d- affixes of Set I are the allomorphs of wa- and ya-, respectively, for verbs beginning with y. The first affix in the braces of Table 1 is simply ma+ya, and the second is a suppletive allomorph of wa+ni. This is simply portmanteau. The third person marker is null. Therefore the argument I present from verb agreement only considers first and second person singular possessors. Verb agreement is illustrated in (15) and (16).

(15) A-ma-ya-p^{h}a.[2]
LOC-1s-2s-hit
'You hit me.'

(16) Taku wa-pazo.
something 1s-show
'I showed something.'

It appears from these examples that Set I marks subject agreement and Set II marks direct object agreement. But while Set I affixes occur on some intransitive verbs, Set II affixes occur on other intransitive verbs, as shown in (17) and (18).

(17) Wa-nowan.
1s-swim
'I was swimming.'

(18) M-iŝtima.
1s-sleep
'I was sleeping.'

This kind of syntactic behavior is not unusual. Perlmutter and Postal account for it by positing two types of intransitive strata. The first type contains a 1-arc, but no 2-arc. This type of stratum is called an unergative stratum. (17) is initially unergative. In the second type of intransitive stratum, there is a 2-arc, but no 1-arc. This type of stratum is called an unaccusative stratum. (18) is initially unaccusative. Since all sentences must have a final subject in RG, the initial 2 of (18) must advance to 1. This is called

unaccusative advancement. Thus, rules that refer to grammatical relations at the initial level should treat predicates that determine an intransitive initial stratum differently. The hypothesis that intransitive predicates determine these two types of initial stratum is called the Unaccusative Hypothesis. For discussion of linguistic evidence for the Unaccusative Hypothesis and of the semantic correlates of the two types of intransitive predicates, see Perlmutter 1978 and Rosen 1984.

Plunkett and McKeever (1986) discuss the implications of several constructions, including unaccusative clauses, on verb agreement in Sioux. Then they state the following rule for verb agreement:

(19) a. Working 2s determine Set II agreement markers.
b. Nominals heading a 1-arc determine Set I agreement markers.
Where (a) is disjunctively ordered with respect to (b).

Working 2s are discussed in Perlmutter (1982:314). Informally, a nominal is a working 2 if it is a 2 at some level and not a chomeur finally.

Another formulation of the Sioux verb agreement rule has been given by Van Valin (1977) in the framework of Role and Reference Grammar. He claims that verb agreement can be explained almost completely using semantic notions. His rule may be stated as follows:

(20) a. Actor, which includes the semantic role of experiencer, takes Set I agreement.
b. Undergoer, which includes the semantic roles experiencer, patient, goal, source and beneficiary, takes Set II agreement.
c. Site, which includes the semantic roles of location, goal and source, takes Set II agreement with location postposition.

He notes that some verbs are exceptional. They do not take the agreement one would expect. He offers an explanation for this exceptionality based on phonological information. However, according to his rule, a nominal which bears the semantic role of possessor should never determine agreement, but rather the head noun which is an 'actor', 'undergoer' or 'site' should determine agreement. Although he could include possessor under one of his three main role types, he could not predict when the possessor would determine agreement and not one of the other semantic roles. Thus, the effect of PA on verb agreement discussed below constitutes an argument against this rule.

Now consider the following two sentences.

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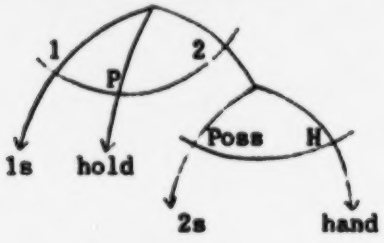
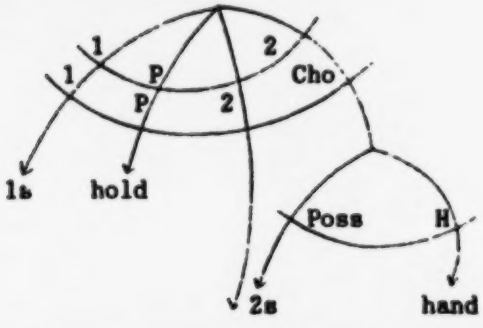
(21) a. Ni-nape o-bd-uspa.
2s-hand LOC-1s-hold
'I'm holding your hand.'

b.



(22) a. Nape o-c^{h}i-uspa.
hand LOC-2s:1s-hold
'I'm holding your hand.'

b.



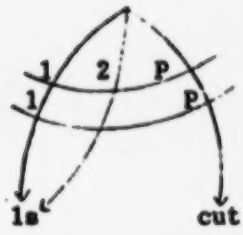
In (21) the verb agrees with the first person singular subject. Since "hand" is third person, no agreement marker occurs. This is what Plunkett and McKeever's rule would predict. In (22a), however, the verb agrees with a first person singular subject and a second person direct object. The PA analysis, (22b), accounts for this since the possessor "you" is a final direct object.

4.2 Reflexivization

A reflexive morpheme, ic'i-, occurs on the verb in Dakota when the final direct object is coreferential with the subject.[3] This is illustrated in (23).

(23) a. Ba-m-ic'i-hon.
INS-1s-RFL-slash
'I cut myself.'

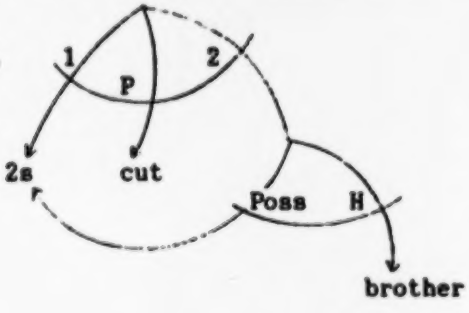
b.



When a subject is coreferential with a possessor, reflexive morphology is absent in some cases (24a), but present in others (25a).

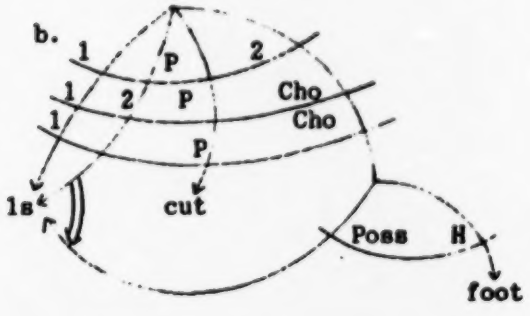
(24) a. Ni-šunka ba-ya-hon.
2s-(younger) brother INS-2s-slash
'You cut your brother.'

b.



(25) a. Siha ba-ma-ic'i-hon.
foot INS-1s-RFL-slash
'I cut my foot.'

b.



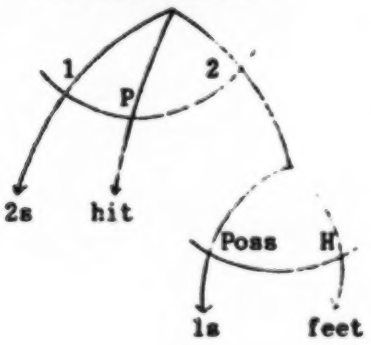
The PA analysis accounts for this difference. The possessor in (24a) is not a direct object at any level, and therefore should not determine reflexive morphology on the verb. The possessor in (25a) bears no initial grammatical relation to the clause, but is a final direct object in the clause. Therefore, it does determine reflexive morphology on the verb. Equi accounts for the lack of a possessive morpheme in the NP.

4.3 Distribution of possessive morpheme

I mentioned in section 3 that one method of expressing possession in Dakota is attaching person agreement to the possessed noun. I also said that this construction is related to PA. These two constructions have similar initial strata, but different final strata. Consider (26) and (27).

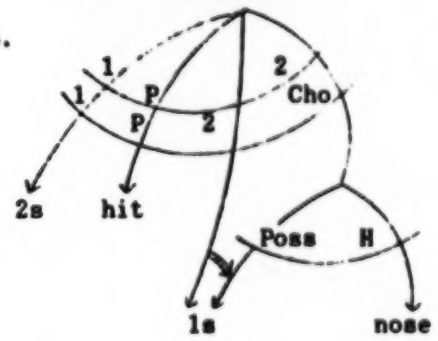
(26) a. Mi-siha a-ya-p^{h}a.
1s-feet LOC-2s-hit
'You hit my feet.'

b.



(27) a. p^{h}asu a-ma-ya-p^{h}a.
nose LOC-1s-2s-hit
'You hit my nose.'

b.



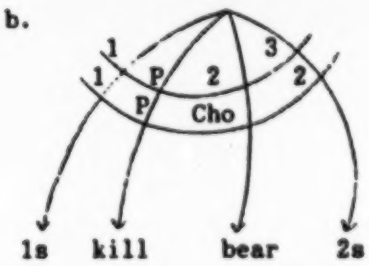
Initially the possessor is in the NP and the body part is the head of the NP that is the direct object. But in the final stratum of (27) the possessor ascends from the NP and becomes a constituent of the clause. Equi accounts for the lack of the possessive morpheme in the NP. Thus, the construction represented in (26) has the same initial stratum that a PA construction has.

4.4 The morpheme ki

Dakota Sioux has a verbal affix, ki-, which has been claimed in the literature to show verbal agreement with the indirect object/benefactive (cf. 28), and also to express possession in the VP, as in (29) (Van Valin 1977:15-16 and Williamson 1984:36-38). This leaves an ambiguity unexplained, cf. (28) and (29). Plunkett and McKeever (1986) argue that Sioux allows 3-2 and BEN-2 advancement, thus it can be claimed that ki- registers this advancement on the verb. This is important since their verb agreement rule, (19), predicts that the verb agrees with a nominal that is initially an indirect object/benefactive or a possessor and finally a direct object.

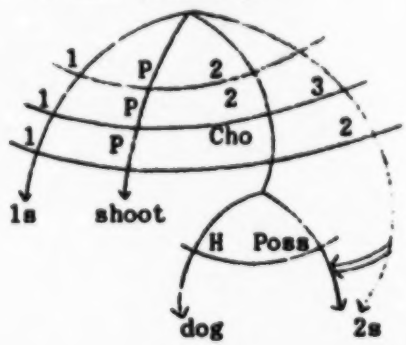
(28) a. Mat^{h}o kin c^{h}i-ci-k'te.[4]
bear DEF 2s:1s-ADV-kill
'I killed the bear for you.'

b.



(29) a. Šunka c^{h}i-ci-kute.
dog 2s:1s-ADV-shoot
'I shot your dog.'

b.



(28a) can mean 'I killed your bear' and (29a) can mean 'I shot the dog for you.' This ambiguity can be accounted for by comparing the final strata in (28b) and (29b). Namely, the possessor and the beneficiary are both final objects, and the initial objects are final chomeurs.

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5 Constraints

5.1 Grammatical relation of the host

Perlmutter and Postal (1974) initially proposed the Host Limitation Law (HLL):

(30) Only nominals bearing a term relation can serve as host of ascensions.

Dakota follows this law by only allowing Possessor Ascension from an initial 2. In (31) it can be seen that the host may be a final 2 of a transitive stratum.

(31) Nape ba-ma-ya-ksa.
hand INS-1s-2s-separate
'You cut off my hand.'

In (32) it can be seen that the host cannot be a final 1 of a transitive clause.

(32) Nape o-ma-ya-yuta.
hand LOC-1s-2s-touch
*'Your hand touched me.'
'You touched my hand.'

Some final 1's of intransitive clauses can host Possessor Ascensions, as shown in (33b).

(33) a. Šica-ma-mna.
bad-1s-smell
'I stink.'

b. Siha šica-ma-mna
foot bad-1s-smell
'My feet stink.'

Others cannot, as in (34c).

(34) a. Wa-ni.
1s-live
'I am alive.'

b. Natahu mi-t^{h}awa ni.
brain 1s-belong live
'My brain is alive.'

c. *Natahu wa-ni.
brain 1s-live

Clauses of the type in (33) all have predicates that determine an initially unaccusative stratum: i.e. the initial stratum contains a 2 but no 1. This is shown by the verb agreement in (33a). The agreement is a Set II affix. According to Plunkett and McKeever's rule the final subject heads a 2 arc. Clauses of the type shown in (34) all contain predicates that determine initially unergative strata. Thus their final subjects determine Set I agreement (34a). In unergative clauses there are no initial 2's to host PA. (The reader should refer to section 4.1). (35) shows that possessors cannot ascend out of indirect objects.

(35) a. Šunka ni-t^{h}awa pweẑuta wa-k'u.[5]
dog 2s-belong medicine 1s-give
'I fed medicine to your dog.'

b. *Šunka pweẑuta c^{h}i-c'u.
dog medicine 2s:1s-give

Example (36) shows that possessors cannot ascend out of benefactive NPs.

(36) a. Šunka ni-t^{h}awa woweta wa-kahi.
dog 2s-belong food 1s-bring
'I brought food for'to your dog.'

b. *Šunka woweta c^{h}i-ci-kahi.
dog food 2s:1s-ADV-bring

Although the indirect object/benefactive can advance, so that the initial 3 is a direct object, ascension cannot occur. If ascension were to occur here, it would be the possessor of an alienable object, since an indirect object/benefactive is not usually a body part (see section 5.2 and 5.3). PA of the type discussed in 5.3 requires the possessor to advance to 2. This would be the second 3-2 advancement in this clause. I have no data to warrant this double advancement to 2. In summary, the host must be the iritial 2 of the clause.

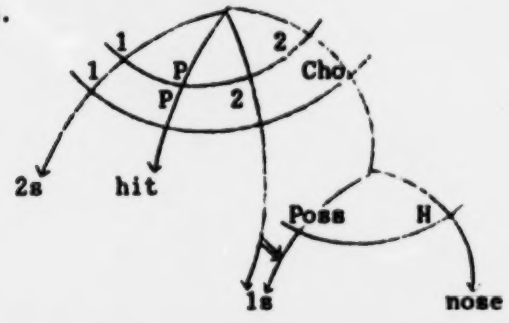
5.2 Possessor ascension with inalienable objects

There are two PA constructions in Dakota. The first occurs with some inalienable objects: specifically body parts. It does not occur with kinship relations. The second occurs with alienable objects. I discuss Possessor Ascension with inalienable objects first. The second type will be discussed in section 5.3.

The PA that occurs with body parts is the simpler case. It allows the possessor of the body parts to ascend directly to the 2 in the matrix clause, cf. (37b). Since the possessor is the final direct object of the matrix clause, it determines agreement on the verb. Equi erasure occurs accounting for the lack of the pronominal prefix in the NP. The body part is finally a chomeur. (27) restated here as (37) illustrates this type of PA:

(37) a. P^{h}asu a-ma-ya-p^{h}a.
nose LOC-1s-2s-hit
'You hit my nose.'

b.



Examples (38) and (39) show that the possessed noun must be a body part for this type of PA.

(38) Ŝunka o-c^{h}i-yut^{h}a.
dog LOC-2s:1s-touch
*'I touched your dog.'
'Dog, I touched you.'

(39) T^{h}ankŝi gu-ma-ya-ya
sister burn-1s-2s-cause
*'You burned my sister.'
'Sister, you burned me.'

When this construction is formulated with something other than body parts it either means something other than possession, or it is ungrammatical.

5.3 Alienable objects

The second type of PA is the construction that occurs with alienable objects. However, just as in the above examples, kin relations do not sanction this type of Ascension.

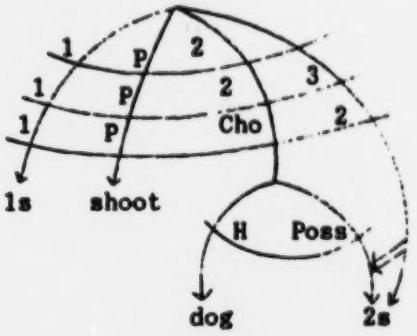
In the second type of Possessor Ascension the possessor of a NP that is initially a 2 ascends to a 3 and then advances to a 2. (41) illustrates this type of PA. In this clause the host is an initial 2. The possessor ascends to 3 and advances to 2 as evidenced by the morpheme ki- that is marked on the verb.

(40) Ŝunka ni-t^{h}awa wa-kute.
dog 2s-belong 1s-shoot
'I shot your dog.'

(41) a. šunka c^{h}i-ci-kute
dog 2s:1s-ADV-shoot
'I shot your dog.'

b. *Ni-šunka wa-kute.
2s-dog 1s-shoot

c.



As discussed in section 4.3, the construction in (40) is not a possessive construction but a relative clause. But now consider (41b). Van Valin (1977:45) claims that alienable objects never take the person prefixes as inalienable objects do. In fact, the only types of constructions in which inalienable objects can be used are either PA or relative clauses. This can be accounted for by claiming that PA is obligatory with possessors of alienable objects. The PA facts described here look very much like those described by Judith Aissen for Tzotzil (1987) which does not allow final 3s.

6 Conclusion

There are two types of Possessor Ascension in Dakota Sioux. The first type I discussed follows the Host Limitation Law, cf. (30), and is optional. That is to say, the possessor ascends to bear the grammatical relation of the NP that hosts it. This occurs only when the noun being possessed is a body part. The second type I presented is an ascension of a possessor to 3 followed by advancement to 2. This type is obligatory and occurs only when the noun being possessed is alienable. Neither type of Possessor Ascension occurs with the possessor of kin relations. Finally, possessors only ascend from NPs that are initial 2s.

NOTES

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The following abbreviations are used: 1s -- first person singular, 2s -- second person singular, 3s -- third person singular, pl -- plural, LOC -- locative, POSS - possessive, ADV -- advancement, BEN -- benefactive, ANIM -- animate, INDF -- indefinite, DEF -- definite, RFL -- reflexive, INS -- instrumental.

1. Boas and Deloria (1941), Van Valin (1977), and Williamson (1984) all mention that the verb sometimes agrees with the possessor, but that is as far as they go. They do not discuss other peculiarities in the syntax of such sentences. They do not attempt to account for when the verb agrees with possessors. And they do not attempt to put this phenomena into universal perspective. In this paper I do all three.

2. Dakota Sioux is a language with very productive verbal prefixation. I only introduce prefixation here. For further study of this topic I refer the reader to several other good sources on this topic (cf. Boas and Deloria (1941), Van Valin (1977), and Williamson (1984)). Dakota has several sets of verbal prefixes which modify the verb they attach to. Two of the most common are instrument and location. For example, two instrumental prefixes are: 1) ba-, which signifies that the action is done by a sawing motion, as with a knife, Riggs (1968:65), or 2) ya-, which signifies that the action is done with the mouth, Riggs (1968:600). Either of these may occur with a set of verbs (i.e. ksa to be seperate), changing the meaning of the verb slightly, cf. (I).

(I) a. ba-ksa
INS-separate
'to cut off'

b. ya-ksa
INS-separate
'to bite off'

Since this topic is out of the scope of this paper, I will use the abbreviations INS and LOC for all the prefixes in the sets of instrumentals and locatives, respectively, rather than specifying the precise meaning of the prefix.

3. Williamson (1979:359) says that ic'i- occurs when the subject is coreferential with the object (2's or 3's). In my analysis, ic'i- occurs when the subject is coreferential with 3 or Ben, but only when they have advanced to 2.

4. The k of ki- palatalizes following a front vowel.

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5. The verb k'u, 'to give', unlike other verbs, doesn't take the advancement morpheme ki-. But it could be claimed that 3-2 advancement still occurs. The argument for this is based on verb agreement. When advancement occurs the verb agrees with the initial 3, consider the following, (II).

(II) Can he c^{h}i-c'u.
stick DEM 2s:1s-give
'I gave you the stick.'

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